



# Ackworth Community Church News Letter

[www.ackworthcommunitychurch.co.uk](http://www.ackworthcommunitychurch.co.uk)

May 2021

Contact:  
Church Leader

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## What's Happening This Month

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## Ash's Letter

***So then, prepare your hearts and minds for action! Stay alert and fix your hope firmly on the marvellous grace that is coming to you. – 1 Peter 1: 13 (The Passion Translation)***

One of our little routines during May is to get a cardboard box and start to put in it items of food that we'll use at the end of the month when we go on holiday. It's exciting to see the box in the corner of the dining room and it helps us to prepare and to look forward to going away. Hopefully this year the box will be in its usual place and we might even be able to visit the seaside again; now there's a lovely thought.

It has got me thinking about getting ready and making preparations. As you're all aware, this past year has been a year of lockdowns, separation and curtailed plans. I'm sure we've all experienced some degree of loss and difficulty in getting through this most unusual and difficult of years.

However, it does now seem as though there is hope on the horizon. The lockdown is gradually lifting and bit by bit, freedom and normality are being restored. If all goes to plan and there are no further spikes in hospitalisations and coronavirus deaths, by the end of June the government plan is to allow indoor gatherings and remove social distancing measures. This should open the way for us to start to meet together again as a church, face to face and to worship together again; now there's another lovely thought.

As we approach that time, I'm sure there will need to be a time for each of us to get ready and make preparations. Over these coming weeks we'll continue in our online services to look at the process of rebuilding that the people of Israel went through following their return from captivity in Babylon. In the books of Ezra, Haggai and Nehemiah, we see the recounts of how the Israelites returned and built first the temple and then the walls of Jerusalem.



These stories highlight the dedication, courage, hard work and fortitude of the people as they sought to carry out what the Lord had asked them to do.

Equally for us too, we need to prepare our hearts and minds for action, as the passion version of 1 Peter 1: 13 says. We have spent the past year online and I'm grateful for the way that we have been able to use technology (facebook live and zoom) to keep in touch and keep meeting together, albeit distanced. As we start to meet together again however, we will need to stir ourselves to action. Even in the process of meeting together on a Sunday morning, it will require us to have the discipline to get up, and to gather together and as we then seek to continue to reach out to Ackworth in various ways, again it will require dedication, courage, hard work and fortitude.

So then, Ackworth Community Church prepare your hearts and minds for action! Stay alert and fix your hope firmly on the marvellous grace that is coming to you.

Ash.

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## Prayer and Pastoral Support

Just a reminder that should a need arise; there are a couple of means of support available. Firstly, there is prayer support, so if you contact Ash or any of the elders with a prayer request then they can circulate it to people through e-mail and word-of-mouth.

Also, there is pastoral support, so again you could contact Ash, Tony, Neill, Alyn or Denise and they will arrange some appropriate help where possible.



## Church Website

Our Sunday Services are now online as well as the monthly news letters both are in the resources tab on the website.

[www.ackworthcommunitychurch.co.uk](http://www.ackworthcommunitychurch.co.uk)

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### *Birthday Celebrations*

15<sup>th</sup> May - May

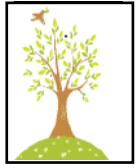
16<sup>th</sup> May - Dylan

16<sup>th</sup> May - Andrew

23<sup>rd</sup> May - Alison

28<sup>th</sup> May - Lycan

*A Very Happy Birthday From Everyone At  
Ackworth Community Church*



## Lessons from the Story of Joshua and Jericho

Most children's Bible will tell the story of the Battle Jericho. Having assumed the mantle of leadership, Joshua now leads the Israelites across the Jordan and into the Promised Land. That which Israel had awaited the past 40 years is now under their feet. Yet their journey is not complete. Standing in their way is the city of Jericho, a large and impressive city surrounded by a towering wall. Like many times before, Israel responds to this obstacle with fear and trembling. Only Joshua remains faithful, rallying the people to remain responsive to God's leading.

The battle for Jericho centres around the strange command for the people to begin marching around the city. For six days, the people silently march around the city. How this must have looked to the sentries atop the Jericho wall! On the seventh day, Israel marches around Jericho seven times, shouting out at the completion of the seventh trip. Miraculously, the walls of Jericho crumble, and Israel captures the city.

This event is significant for Israel. With the defeat of Jericho, their exodus is officially over. The Battle of Jericho means that God had brought Israel to the place of life and promise. Indeed, the battle also declares that, even within the boundaries of the Promised Land, God would continue to fight for them. The divine promise that "I will be your God, and you will be my people" (Exodus 6:7) remained true.

### **1. Faith involves following the Lord.**

When we think of the Battle of Jericho, we often skip the account of Joshua's vision of an angel. We focus more on the march around the walls and the battle cry at the end. Yet it is an angel that provides instructions on how Israel will overtake the city. We read about this in Joshua 5. This interaction between Joshua and the commander of the Lord's army is unique and instructive. Scripture records that Joshua asks, "are you for us or for our enemies." Curiously, the angel responds "Neither." (5:14)

This is an important scene because it can be far too easy for us to assume that the Lord is on our side, as opposed to the side of others. If we believe that the Lord thinks about everything (and everyone!) exactly as we do,



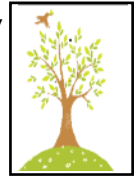
can too easily see the world in an ' us vs them' mentality. We may even begin to believe that God's role in our lives is to justify our causes and concerns. We lead, God follows.

When the angel responds "neither" a deep truth is communicated about Israel's position before the Lord. The Lord was not present to serve the wishes of Israel. Rather, Israel is called to follow the way of the Lord. To overtake Jericho, Israel had to acknowledge that God fought for them. There was simply no possible way that the odd-ball strategy could ever provide the victory otherwise.

There are times in our lives where God's interaction with us may appear random or nonsensical. God continually pushes us past our logical schemes and machinations to move us to a place of humble trust. This is done so that we can learn the art of dependence on God. It is within this place of faithful dependence that we experience the victory that is wrought, not by our management, but by his own hand on our lives. The likes of victory, freedom, and redemption are found not through our own leading, but by following the way of the Lord. God leads. We follow. This is the way of faith.

## **2. The power of worship.**

The daily march around the city must have looked odd for the inhabitants of Jericho. More to the point, it must have felt odd for the warriors of Israel! The point of marching around the city was not to show the strength or might of the nation. The whole point of marching around the walls of Jericho was to show Israel's faithfulness to God through an act of worship. Scripture records that "seven priests carrying the seven trumpets before the Lord went forward, blowing their trumpets, and the ark of the Lord's covenant followed them" (Joshua 6:8). The procession around the walls of Jericho was a procession of worship more than a procession of military might.



There is something profound about responding to the challenges of our lives, not with an act of vehement defiance or shaking of the fist, but with an act of worship. Worship places us in the appropriate disposition before our Lord. We look to the Lord's strength not our own. In worship, we recognize that the Lord alone provides the way forward. In the end, our life with God is paved not through the execution of our battle-plans, but through the bowing of our knees in humble adoration to the one who created us, redeems us, and constantly sustains us.

### **3. The power of silence.**

Joshua instructs the people to make no battle cry as they travel around the city. From the viewpoint of military strategy, this would have appeared odd. Battle cries were understood to be an important element in obtaining victory over one's enemies. The more fearsome your cry the more intimidating you appeared to your opponent. Conversely, silence in the face of an upcoming battle would only show weakness and fright.

So why did the Lord instruct silence? Obviously, a deeper meaning is being conveyed. Silence does two things. Silence allows us to listen to the voice of the Lord who goes before us. Israel marched in silence to acknowledge the Lord who went before them. In silence, Israel marched in an attitude of faith. The battle would not be won by their shouts but by listening to the voice of the Lord.

Silence is also an indication that one is in the presence of someone greater. It is a position of humility. Silence is the internal act of bowing our spirit before the Lord in service and adoration. In silence, we offer the Lord the fullness of our attention and our lives. Thus, Israel marched in silence, to show that their life in the Promised Land was rooted in an acknowledgment of the Lord.



We live in a world of the myriad of voices, all of which vie for our attention and allegiance. When we fill our lives with too much noise, we essentially rob ourselves of the opportunity to experience God's power and presence. Thus, it is important that we cultivate the habit of silence through which we allow God's voice to direct us.

#### **4. Faith means perseverance.**

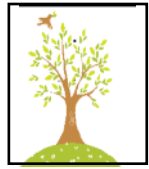
The Battle of Jericho was not a one-day affair. Israel was instructed to march around the city for seven days. Furthermore, on the seventh day, Israel had to walk around the city seven times. Again, and again, and again, Israel journeyed around the city trusting that, eventually, God would bring the walls down. Israel had to persevere.

Too easily today, faith gets set aside in favour of that which is quick or convenient. After all, we live in a world of instant gratification. Yet Jericho was not taken in a day. We see the call to perseverance throughout all of scripture. God's work often occurs over a span of time.

There is no opportunity to grow if God's plan was always revealed at the snap of a finger. More importantly, nor would there be any opportunity to join in what God is doing. Israel's march around the walls of Jericho gave Israel the time they needed to exercise the fullness of their faith. The marches also gave Israel the ability to anticipate their involvement in God's victory over Jericho.

The same is true in our lives. Our life with God is one of trust and perseverance. When we are in the position of waiting, we must remember that this gives us the ability to grow in our faith. Furthermore, perseverance opens the door to our participation in what the Lord will do in our midst.



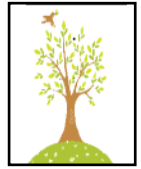


## **5. Recognizing the larger story of redemption.**

Prior to the battle at Jericho, we read that Joshua sends spies to suss out the city's military capability. On this trip, the spies meet Rahab the prostitute, who, in a seemingly strange act of faithfulness to Yahweh, aids the spies in the promise that she will be spared. Indeed, this is what occurs. After the defeat of Jericho, Joshua commands the spies to return to Rahab's house and rescue her and her family. This is the last we read about Rahab.

What does this tell us? Our individual battles are part of the larger story of redemption. God weaves together that which is beyond the scope of accomplishment and merit to fully establish God's glorious kingdom on earth. God's ways are not based on merit or deserving, strength, or prowess. God's kingdom is established through the way of grace, and in grace, we participate in the larger arc of God's redemptive work. Rahab's place in the lineage of Jesus shows us that our individual lives are important elements in God's salvation plan.

Like every story in Scripture, the Battle of Jericho lends itself to multiple lessons. We can never exhaust the truths that God reveals through the pages of Scripture. So, I invite you to take the time needed and read the opening chapters of the book of Joshua. Read through the story of Jericho and see what other truths Lord has for you.



Tell us what your  
Favourite Book  
is?



## A Voice In The Wind 12.49

This classic series has already inspired nearly 2 million readers, but both loyal fans and new readers will want this 20th anniversary edition of a Christian classic, which includes a foreword from the publisher, a letter from and Q & A with Francine Rivers, color map, an illustrated glossary, and discussion questions suitable for personal and group use.

The first book in the best selling Mark of the Lion series, A Voice in the Wind brings readers back to the first century and introduces them to a character they will never forget--Hadassah. Torn by her love for a handsome aristocrat, this young slave girl clings to her faith in the living God for deliverance from the forces of decadent Rome.



## The Shepherd's Wife £9.93

Yeshua of Nazareth has two sisters: Damaris, married to a wealthy merchant's son, and Pheodora, married to a simple shepherd from Bethlehem.

Damaris can't understand why her younger sister settled for such a poor existence, but she does what she can to share her abundance.

When Pheodora's husband suffers an unexpected reversal of fortune and is thrown into debtor's prison, she returns to Nazareth, where she pins her hopes on two she-goats who should give birth to spotless white kids that would be perfect for the upcoming Yom Kippur sacrifice.

In the eighteen months between the kids' birth and the opportunity to sell them and redeem her husband from prison, Pheodora must call on her wits, her family, and her God in order to provide for her daughters and survive. But when every prayer and ritual she knows is about God's care for Israel, how can she trust that God will hear and help a lowly shepherd's wife?



# Prayer Diary

Please pray for each other.

If you would like to be on the prayer list please let Lisa know.

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
					1 David & Carol R	2 Jean Aaron's Family
3 Matt, Cheryl, Oscar & Georgina	4 Somesh & Jasmine	5 Neill, Sue, Grace & Hope	6 Denise Joan B Jacquie May	7 Kate & Family	8 Joan A James Julie	9 Andy, Sue & Rachel
10 David & Janet	11 Jeff & Kath	12 Dayo, Anu, Shalom & Shekinah	13 Brian & Linda	14 Dot Brenda Lisa Vera	15 Brian & Sheila	16 Derek Catherine & Family
17 John & Lilian	18 Julian, & Caroline	19 Ann- Marie & Alison	20 Kevin & Jeanie	21 Owen & Vickie	22 Steven & Christina	23 Julian & Valerie
24 Alyn & Carole	25 Neil & Eileen	26 Ash, Di, Joel & Cerwys	27 Andrew, Kimber- ley, Hannah & Joanna	28 Adrian, Anne & Family	29 Tony & Family	30 Stan & Moira
31 Elders						